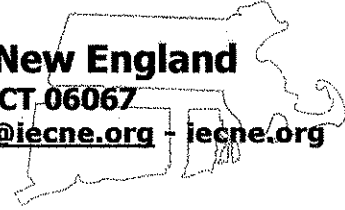




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TO: The Honorable Tom Colapietro and Rep. Jim Shapiro
Co-Chairs, General Law Committee
Members of the General Law Committee

FROM: Lisa Hutner, Executive Director

DATE: February 5, 2009

RE: **Proposed H. B. No. 5162 AN ACT CONCERNING LICENSED
ELECTRICIANS AND THE INSTALLATION OF
PHOTOVOLTAIC ENERGY SYSTEMS.**

We have been advised by the state Department of Consumer Protection that licensed electricians are already authorized to install photovoltaic energy systems within the scope of the E-1 licenses. Accordingly, our licensing exam, apprenticeship programs and continuing education requirements all include material relative to photovoltaic energy systems.

Therefore, although we appreciate the intent of the proposed bill, we do not believe it is necessary. We do support efforts, however, to clarify under the Clean Energy Fund's solar rebate program that properly licensed electricians should be considered eligible to be certified as a solar installer. Under the current program, an E-1 licenseholder cannot be certified unless documentation of experience including a minimum of three solar installations is provided or experience with ten solar installations as an apprentice.

Once an individual has obtained status as an E-1 licenseholder, he/she should be authorized to install solar panels and other apparatus without demonstrating additional experience, much of which is arbitrary. Serving as an apprentice on ten installations, for example, may or may not qualify someone to install solar panels, depending on how far along they were in their apprenticeship, their duties, etc.

Due to these requirements, it is our understanding that only 15 firms have been certified as eligible installers. As a result, homeowners who had solar panels installed by licensed electricians were shut out of the rebate program and very concerned. This creates deterrents rather than incentives for moving to solar energy.

The Independent Electrical Contractors of New England is the premier trade association representing Connecticut, Massachusetts and Rhode Island independent electrical contractors aggressively working with the industry to establish a free environment for merit shop -- a philosophy that promotes the concept of free enterprise, open competition and economic opportunity for all.